

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 5767 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
NICOSIA 16 AUGUST 1974. QUOTE:

S E C R E T ATHENS 5767

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR GR
SUBJ: GREEK-U.S. RELATIONS: VIEWS OF MINISTER TO PRIME MINISTER
GEORGE RALLIS

1. MINISTER TO PRIME MINISTER GEORGE RALLIS MET INFORMALLY
WITH DCM THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS CURRENT SITUATION. THEY
HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR FOURTEEN YEARS AND DCM HAS GREAT
RESPECT FOR RALLIS' INTEGRITY AND OBJECTIVITY. RALLIS IS
STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST WHO IN RECENT YEARS HAS PROFESSED
HIMSELF TO BE DISENCHANTED WITH U.S. POLICY AND HAS KEPT
U.S. OFFICIALS AT ARM'S LENGTH.

2. RALLIS TOLD DCM THAT GREEK CABINET WAS BADLY SPLIT
ON MEASURES GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE TO APPEASE ANTI-AMERICAN
AND ANTI-NATO SENTIMENTS CURRENTLY SO APPEALING TO GREEK

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PUBLIC OPINION. CABINET WAS ALSO SPLIT ABOUT HOW FAR GREECE

COULD AND SHOULD GO IN STRIKING BACK MILITARILY AT TURKEY. HE SAID THAT KARAMANLIS AND AVEROFF WERE ONLY "MODERATES" LEFT IN CABINET. RALLIS DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS TORN BETWEEN DESIRE TO PUNISH TURKS AND APPREHENSION LEST RASH MILITARY ACTIONS FAIL THEREBY WEAKENING KARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT AND PLAYING INTO HANDS OF GREEK LEFT. WHEN CABINET MET YESTERDAY WITH MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO DISCUSS WHAT COULD BE DONE KARAMANLIS, AVEROFF AND RALLIS OPPOSED ACTIONS AGAINST GREEK-U.S. OR GREEK-NATO COOPERATION WHICH, THOUGH IMMEDIATELY POPULAR, WOULD IN THEIR VIEW DAMAGE LONG RANGE GREEK INTERESTS. ON OTHER HAND, WHEN CABINET DISCUSSED FEASIBILITY OF MORE AGGRESSIVE GREEK MILITARY ACTION ON CYPRUS, SUCH AS AIR STRIKE FROM CRETE OR ATTEMPT TO PUSH TURKS OUT OF FAMAGUSTA, RALLIS HAD VOTED WITH MILITANTS AND ONLY KARAMANLIS AND AVEROFF HAD COUNSELED MODERATION.

3. ACCORDING TO RALLIS, KARAMANLIS SOUGHT FORMULA WHICH WOULD PRESERVE NATIONAL CREDENTIALS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITHOUT DOING IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO GREECE'S POSITION IN WESTERN ALLIANCE. RALLIS SAID, "I THINK THE BASES ISSUE IS ALL RIGHT FOR THE TIME BEING. SOME HOTHEADS IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE PUSHING THE PRIME MINISTER, BUT HE HAS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WITH HIM." RALLIS WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE FEARED THAT TURKISH STUBBORNESS WOULD CAUSE THE ISSUE TO BE REVIVED IN THE ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE THAT THE U.S. WAS EXERTING EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON TURKEY. HE THOUGHT THE SECRETARY'S TELEPHONE CALL AND LETTER TO KARAMANLIS INDICATED THAT WASHINGTON WAS OUT OF TOUCH WITH GREEK REALITIES.

4. "WE HAVE KNOWN FOR DAYS THAT THE TURKS INTENDED TO SECURE A LINE FROM FAMAGUSTA THROUGH NICOSIA TO THE WESTERN COAST," HE SAID. "YET THE SECRETARY'S LETTER IMPLIED THAT WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL BECAUSE THE TURKS WERE NOT PUSHING BEYOND THEIR STATED OBJECTIVES." ACCORDING TO RALLIS, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WATCHING CLOSELY TO SEE WHETHER THE TURKS WOULD BE WILLING TO DRAW BACK FROM THE ATTILA LINE PRIOR TO A RESUMPTION OF DIRECT GREEK-TURKISH TALKS. "NEITHER KARAMANLIS NOR ANY OTHER GREEK LEADER CAN AFFORD TO RESUME TALKS ON THE BASIS OF A FAIT ACCOMPLI CREATED BY TURKISH ARMS," HE SAID.

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5. RALLIS CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION KARAMANLIS HAD BOUGHT TWO OR THREE WEEKS OF RESPITE BY HIS RHETORICAL WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO. THE GREEK LEFT GENERALLY, AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU SPECIFICALLY, WOULD PUSH KARAMANLIS STRENUOUSLY TO MOVE FASTER ALONG THE ROAD OF DISENGAGEMENT. WHILE PAPANDREOU'S POLITICAL JUDGMENT WAS POOR AND HIS CONSTITUENCY HAD YET TO BE ESTABLISHED, RALLIS WARNED THAT

HE WOULD BE AGITATING AN ISSUE THAT AT LEAST TEMPORARILY HAD GREAT POPULAR APPEAL FOR THE GREEK RIGHT AS WELL AS THE LEFT. IN RALLIS' OPINION A MORE ACTIVE U.S. ROLE AND GREATER TURKISH FLEXIBILITY WERE INDISPENSABLE IF THE KARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT WAS TO STAY IN COMMAND OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN GREECE.

6. DCM CAREFULLY REVIEWED OUR POSITION ON THE CYPRUS CRISIS WITH RALLIS, POINTING OUT THAT PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM WASHINGTON PLEASING TO GREEK EARS WOULD HAVE LITTLE PRACTICAL EFFECT AND WOULD SIMPLY REDUCE OUR LEVERAGE IN ANKARA. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS WAS WORKING INTENSIVELY TO BRING ABOUT AN ENDURING SETTLEMENT OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. THE INTERCOMMUNAL ARRANGEMENTS ON THE ISLAND HAD NOT WORKED. SOMETHING BETTER HAD TO BE FOUND. THIS COULD NOT BE DONE OVERNIGHT AND THE GREEK GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT EXPECT THE IMPOSSIBLE. IT WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE GREEKS AVOID SHORT TERM CATHARTIC ACTIONS WHICH WOULD UNDERCUT THEIR LONG TERM INTERESTS. GREECE'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. AND ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE HAD SERVED GREECE'S INTERESTS WELL OVER A QUARTER CENTURY. THIS WAS THE ANCHOR THAT HAD STEADIED THEM IN THE GREAT STORM OF THE BANDIT WAR AND IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO JETTISON IT DURING THE CYPRUS SQUALL.

7. RALLIS SAID THAT HE WAS WELL AWARE THAT GREECE BELONGED IN THE WESTERN CAMP. HE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT WE REALIZED THAT WOUNDED NATIONAL PRIDE COULD BE MORE POWERFUL THAN RATIONAL CONVICTION.

8. COMMENT: RALLIS' COMMENTS LEAD US TO DRAW THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS: (A) GREEK GOVT WILL NOT AGREE TO RESUMPTION OF DIRECT TALKS WITH TURKISH GOVERNMENT IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE;
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(B) GREEKS ARE INVESTING THEIR HOPES IN AMERICAN PRESSURE ON TURKS TO ACHIEVE TURKISH PULLBACK FROM ATTILA LINE;
(C) QUESTION OF GREEK MILITARY MOVES ON CYPRUS IS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION WITH ODDS IN FAVOR OF GOG ATTEMPT TO LAND REINFORCEMENTS ON ISLAND; (D) KARAMANLIS AND AVEROFF, WITH BACKING OF SENIOR MINISTERS, WANT TO AVOID FURTHER LOOSENING OF GREECE'S MILITARY COOPERATION WITH U.S. AND NATO TIES BUT ARE FEELING THE HEAT OF PUBLIC OPINION; (E) FINALLY, GREEK LEADERSHIP IS LESS APPREHENSIVE OF THREAT FROM THE RIGHT, THE DIMENSIONS OF WHICH THEY CAN DISCERN AND THUS COUNTER, THAN THEY ARE OF THREAT FROM THE LEFT, THE DIMENSIONS OF WHICH ARE STILL CONJECTURAL. TASCA

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